

community and state. This was accomplished by the director working closely with board members and friends groups until they had a clear understanding about the change at the institution. At Jamestown Settlement we saw the positive results of their new outreach program, giving schools and teachers the opportunity to be involved during the planning and development stage of lesson plans.

Our classroom for the Seminar for Historic Administration was Colonial Williamsburg and we were allowed to use it as our laboratory. We could listen to their programs, for us mostly evening presentations; we were invited and encouraged to take advantage of their staff and their knowledge, which many of us did. One session focused on the importance of knowing what the visitors expected when at a historical site. We practiced the technique and process of using surveys to find out the information on the Colonial Williamsburg visitors. Our assignment was to interview visitors after they had witnessed or interacted with one of Colonial Williamsburg presentations. The opportunity to do it first-hand was extremely valuable and the information we received from the visitors validated what all the speakers had been telling us in class. The exercise taught us the general population has an increased interest in vernacular history, in presentations which they can personally relate to and which produce an emotional experience, the critical importance of material and programs interesting to children with the idea "if the children are having a good time so are the parents", and object-based learning, which uses the museum collection more effectively to tell the stories.

As with any gathering of this type, the diversity of the institutions and the different expertise of the participants set the stage for knowledge and information exchange, and great brain storming opportunities. While everyone believes their situation is completely different from all others, I feel comfortable in saying there was not a person there who did not learn something from the group and there was not a session in which a useful tool was not presented.

The Seminar's format was simply suggestions on how to do what I had heard the Northeast Regional Director, Ms. Marie Rust say many times, "Work smarter not harder!" This was accomplished with timely subjects, great speakers, bright and creative participants, and an interesting place to do it. As I said before, "What more could you ask!"

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Lisa M. Garvin

Colonial Williamsburg A Diary

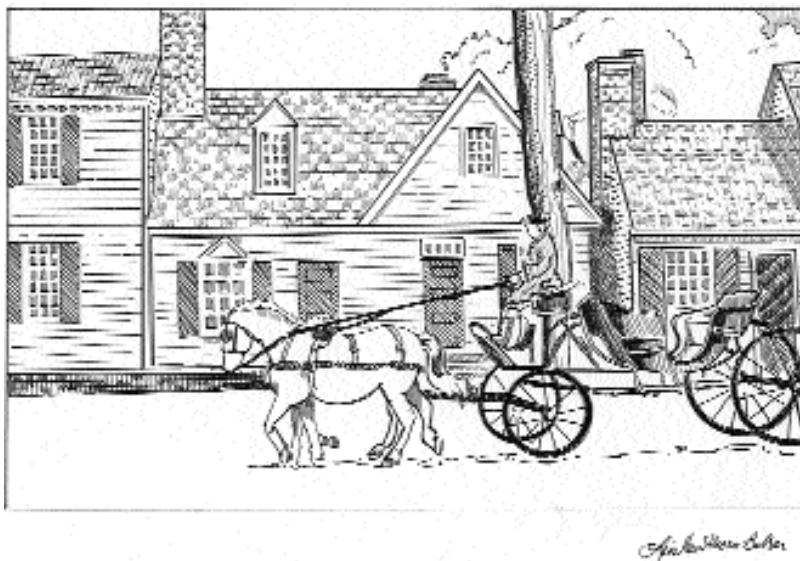
Our seminar group has only been together for a few days and we are already becoming accustomed to traveling back and forth between the 18th and 20th century. Meeting Thomas Jefferson or Martha Washington walking along the streets of Colonial Williamsburg is always a possibility. The daily lives of the famous as well as the local townspeople of Williamsburg are a part of the story told through the outstanding first person interpretive programs here at Colonial Williamsburg.

Interpretive themes, taken from information in the planning document entitled, "Becoming Americans: Our Struggle To Be Both Free and Equal," guide the interpretive operations in the historic district through the implementation of six storylines. As each new storyline is added, over the next few years, visitors continue to interact with the interpreters and thereby learn about the lives of real people living in colonial Virginia: their attitudes, dreams, goals, and thoughts on the eve of the American Revolution.

Our class, made up of 18 participants and our coordinator Polly Jontz, have come from a variety of different parks, museums, and historic sites to participate in a training class entitled, "The 38th Annual Seminar For Historical Administration (SHA)." Today, our first day in class, we were welcomed by CEO and President of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Robert Wilburn.

Each day for the next three weeks we will attend morning and afternoon classes taught by nationally-known speakers. Several evening interpretive presentations on topics as diverse as the types of music and dance in colonial days, the courtroom procedures at witchcraft trials, and the role and implications of slavery in Virginia are also available for seminar participants to attend. Tomorrow night, fellow seminar participants Ann Korzeniewski, William Hiott, and I will attend one such program, "Cry Witch." This program recreates events at the witchcraft trial of Grace Sherwood.

During our seminar we are staying at the Governor's Inn, one of several hotels and facilities operated by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF). A conference room and hospitality room are available for our use, and bus service to and from the historic district is available each day.



The above notes were just the first of those that I would keep during the seminar. Our class participants quickly bonded and over the three weeks discussed challenging topics of importance to museum and historic site supervisors. Outstanding guest speakers covered sessions on current museum issues and trends as well as fund raising, financial management, special events, interpretive programs, and personnel issues.

We not only attended the formal classroom sessions, we also went on-site to programs in exhibition buildings and trade shops in the historic district of Colonial Williamsburg. On-site talks by faculty and staff brought to life the issues raised in classroom presentations.

A common thread running through many of the speakers' presentations was that an organization must have a mission statement that accurately reflects the agency. Colonial Williamsburg President Wilburn invited the class to write such a mission statement for our seminar. At the beginning of the third week we had selected the following mission statement for SHA 96:

SHA Class of 1996 is a group of highly motivated museum professionals, representing diverse institutions who seek to become more effective managers and leaders in the field of historical administration, through exposure to and exchange with colleagues, faculty, and institutions in a supportive and challenging environment.

The result will be the enhancement of our work in stewardship of museum resources, high ethical standards, and advancement of history within our communities.

This statement represented the vision of all seminar participants despite the various educational backgrounds we came from and the great differences in our professional duties. Even though we worked in different states across the country, we still shared common professional goals. The

seminar gave us the opportunity to take a close and insightful look at the museum field in the 1990s and the future challenges to be faced.

The seminar format was so intense that only one day of the three weeks was not scheduled with activities or training. Each weekend we traveled by bus to sites in the nearby area, including the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Jamestown National Historic Site, and Jamestown Settlement. Associated sites operated by the Foundation such as Carter's Grove Plantation were

also a part of the weekend events. At each site we met with staff and toured their facilities. We were also invited to tour two other CWF museums, the Dewitt Wallace Decorative Arts Gallery and the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center at our convenience. At both sites seminar participants were admitted free of charge.

"The three weeks have gone quickly, and this afternoon we received our graduation certificates from the seminar sponsors. Tonight we meet for our class farewell dinner and program. Looking back I am impressed with every phase of the seminar—the quality of guest speakers, the seminar participants and coordinator, the facilities at Colonial Williamsburg, and dedication of the 3,500 people who work to make Colonial Williamsburg such a fabulous operation. I would highly recommend this training to all historic site supervisors."

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For more information on the November 2-22, 1997 seminar, contact Peggy McDonald Howells at 757-220-7211. The seminar is co-sponsored by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the American Association for State and Local History, the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the American Association of Museums.